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Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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S E C R E T LUSAKA 3453

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, ZA
SUBJ: CHONA'S CONCERNS ABOUT RICHARD'S VISIT AND RECONVENING GENEVA

REF: STATE 304769

SUMMARY: CHONA EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE POSTPONEMENT OF THE DATE FOR REOPENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE AND URGES THAT RICHARD BRING A SPECIFIC PLAN RATHER THAN ASK FRONTLINE VIEWS. HE REQUESTS ADVANCE INFORMATION ON RICHARD'S PROPOSAL. FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS MEETING NOW BEING SCHEDULED FOLLOWING RICHARD INITIAL TALKS AND PODGORNY VISIT POSTPONED. END SUMMARY.

1. CHONA ASKED THAT I CONVEY THREE POINTS WHICH ARE TROUBLING HIM AND PRESIDENT KAUNDA.
A. HE IS CONCERNED ABOUT AN INSIPIENT EFFORT TO POSTPONE THE JAN 17 DATE FOR THE REOPENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. THE OSTENSIBLE REASON FOR THE POSTPONEMENT WOULD BE TO GIVE THE NEW CARTER ADMINISTRATION THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME INSTALLED AND FUNCTIONING BEFORE THE CONFERENCE BEGAN AGAIN. CHONA DID NOT SECIFICALLY SAY WHO WAS SEEKING POSTPONEMENT. HE DID INDICATE THAT THERE WAS A SPECIAL EMISSARY FROM DAR IN TOWN AND HE SEEMED TO BE IMPLYING THAT IT WAS THE TANZANIANS WHO MAY BE BEGINNING THE CAMPAIGN FOR POSTPONEMENT. CHONA IS TOTALLY
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OPPOSED TO ANY SUCH POSTPONEMENT. HE BELIEVES THAT ONCE THE DATE IS CHANGED IT BECOMES A FURTHER ELEMENT OF NEGOTIATION AND THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO SCOTCH ANY SUCH CONSIDERATION FROM THE BEGINNING. THE BEST WAY TO DO THIS WOULD BE FOR THE BRITISH WHO ARE CHAIRING THE CONFERENCE TO MAKE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT NO POSTPONEMENT IS UNDER C

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NSIDERATION. IT LATER A REAL NEED
FOR DELAY BECAME APPARENT AS A RESULT OF RICHARD'S CONVERSATIONS,
IT COULD STILL BE ARRANGED. HIS MESSAGE TO ME WAS TO ASK
WASHINGTON TO PRESS THE BRITISH TO MAKE A FIRM STATEMENT ON
THEIR INTENTION TO HOLD TO THE REOPENING DATE OF THE 17TH.
B. CHONA SAID IT IS CRUCIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE FORTHCOMING
TALKS WITH RICHARD THAT HE ARRIVE WITH A SPECIFIC AND DETAILED
PROPOSAL. ANY HINT THAT HE WAS COMING ON A "STUDY MISSION" OR
"FACT-FINDING VISIT" WOULD YTIMULATE DIVISIVE FORCES. THESE
ARE ALREADY APPEARING FOLLOWING THE RETURN OF VARIOUS OBSERVOR
GROUPS FROM GENEVA, EACH CONVEYING ITS OWN INTERPRETATION OF THE
PROGRESS TO DATE AND PROSPECTS. CHONA WENT SO FAR AS TO SAY
THAT HE AND THE PRESIDENT BELIEVED IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE
SECRETARY OR CROSLAND TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE FRONTLINE
PREFIDENTS ASSURING THEM THAT RICHARD WOULD BE CONVEYING A
SPECIFIC PROPOSAL. THE LETTER MIGHT ALSO CONTAIN RZASSURANCE
ON THE REOPENING DATE. THE IMPRESSION WHICH CHONA HAD GOTTEN
FROM DAR AND OTHER CONTACTS SINCE RETURNING WAS THAT RICHARD
MIGHT NOT HAVE A SPECIFIC PROPOSAL AND MAY COME TO CONSULT AND
DISCUSS GENERAL IDEAS. THIS, HE WAS CONVINCED, WOULD PLUNGE THE
DISCUSSIONS INTO A MORASS OF DIFFERING OPINIONS.
C. I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT IT WAS HIS THIRD POINT WHICH WAS THE
REAL REASON FOR CALLING ME OVER. CHONA SAID THE PRESIDENT IS
VERY ANXIOUS TO GET BEFORE RICHARD'S ARRIVAL AN OUTLINE WITH
AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE OF THE PROPOSAL WHICH HE WILL PRESENT.
CHONA SAID HE HAD BEEN INVITED TO GO TO WASHINGTON BY THE
SECRETARY ON HIS WAY BACK TO LUSAKA BUT WAS UNABLE TO DO SO,
HE IMPLIED THAT HE MIGHT HAVE RECEIVED A BRIEFING ON THE PROPOSAL
FROM THE SECRETARY AT THIS TIME. (HE IS SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING
A SHORT VISIT TO WASHINGTON EN ROUTE TO GENEVA WHEN HE WOULD
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HOPE TO HOLD DISCUSSIONS AND MEET ELEMENTS OF THE INCOMING
ADMINISTRATION.) HE SAID THAT HE COULD GIVE ABSOLUTE ASSURANCE
THAT ANY PRELIMINARY DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL WOULD BE
GUARDED BY PRESIDENT KAUNDA IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

2. IN THE COURSE OF THE DISCUSSION CHONA INDICATED THAT THE
FRONTLINE MEETING WHICH IT HAD BEEN PROPOSED BE PRIOR TO THE
RICHARD VISIT WAS NOW BEING CONSIDERED FOR AFTER THE FIRST
OF THE YEAR FOLLOWING RICHARD'S INITIAL ROUND. CHONA ALSO CONFIRMED
THAT THE PODGORNY VISIT IS DEFINITELY POSTPONED FOR THE TIME
BEING.

3. CHONA CONFIRMED THAT HE HAD BEEN BRIEFED BY KASANDA ON THE
ZIMBABWE DEVELOPMENT FUND BUT DID NOT SEEM INTERESTED IN
PURSUING THAT SUBJECT. I ASKED ABOUT THE FOLLOW ON TO HIS NAMIBIA
CONVERSATIONS IN GENEVA AND LONDON AND SPECIFICALLY ABOUT
NEXT STEPS (REFTEL). HE SAID HE HAD THIS VERY MUCH IN MIND
AND WOULD PLAN TO BE IN TOUCH WITH ME NEXT WEEK ON THE SUBJECT.

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COMMENT: CHONA'S GROWING CONCERN THAT THE RICHWRD VISIT CONTAIN A SPECIFIC PROPOSAL MAY HAVE BEEN STIMULATED BY A TIMES OF ZAMBIA ARTICLE DEC 23, REPORTING ON RICHARD'S PRESS CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON IN WHICH HE OUTLINED FOUR ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS FOR BRITISH PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. HE IS CLEARLY QUITE EXERCISED OVER THE MATTER AND WILL PRESS VERY HARD BOTH TO HAVE RICHARD PRESENT A SPECIFIC PROPOSAL AND TO RECEIVE A PRELIMINARY OUTLINE OF IT. LOW

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